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CIA Didn't Trust W. German Spy Units

The latest West German spy scandal may have shaken the Bonn government, but it came as no surprise to the Central Intelligence Agency. In fact, CIA sources tell us that at least one more high-level West German intelligence official is suspected of working for the East Germans.

Fortunately, the number of West Germans who have sold out over the years for love, money or ideology convinced the CIA long ago that its Bonn counterpart could not be trusted with U.S. secrets that are routinely shared with other allies.

The CIA's conclusions about West German intelligence and counterspy agencies was translated into a highly sensitive White House policy—dating back to President Gerald R. Ford—which has denied the West Germans access to "top secret" information in military categories called "Combined Military Operations, Planning and Readiness," "U.S. Order of Battle" and "Military Intelligence."

Four allies are cleared to see the information in all three categories: Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Britain. Japan is allowed to see top-secret data in the military intelligence area.

The CIA's disenchantment with the West German intelligence agency it helped organize and fund began in 1961 with the arrest of a top West German official, who confessed to delivering 15,000 photographs of sensitive files and 20 spools of tapes to Soviet agents in East Berlin, starting 10 years before.

A recent Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report summarized 30 cases of individuals who betrayed NATO secrets to the Soviet bloc since 1949. Eleven were West Germans, five were East German "plants," four were French, four were Belgian, two were Italian and the remaining four were Canadian, British, Turkish and American.

According to the DIA report, lonely German secretaries working for NATO or West German ministries regularly fell for smooth-talking East German spies called "blackbirds" and handed over military secrets.

Here are some of the moonstruck traitors listed in the DIA report:

- Ingrid Garbe worked in the West German mission to NATO from 1976 until her arrest in 1979. She was recruited in 1971 by an East German intelligence officer "with whom she had fallen in love." At the direction of the East German intelligence service, she had initially applied for a job in Bonn's foreign ministry.
- Ursel Lorenzen, another secretary, went to work at NATO headquarters in 1966 and defected to the East in 1979. She "spied 'for love' and . . . married her former East German spymaster following her defection." She is believed to have given East Germany all the NATO secrets she could get her hands on.
- Leonore Heinz Suetterlin was an "unmarried secretary in the West German Foreign Office [who] was wooed and wed by Suetterlin, who, unknown to her, was an agent of the KGB." Beginning in 1960, "she provided her husband more than 3,000 documents from her office, including Foreign Office cable traffic and NATO and German defense and intelligence information."

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